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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography of literature dealing with childhood stress begins with a discussion of the harmful effects of stress on children and the need for parents, teachers, and other adults in the children's lives to help themm learn about stress and develop stress management techniques. A glossary of relevant terms is provided. The bibliography itself contains 75 citations which are organized under the headings of: (1) Overview of Stress; (2) Studies and Literature Concerning Children's Stress; and (3) Stress Management Strategies. Entries in the first category deal with defining stress in children and common stressors and their effects. Entries in the second section examine family- and school-related stressors. Entries in the third section focus on children who cope, activities and techniques for stress management, and teacher and parent roles in helping children manage stress. A summary of information obtained from the research and literature review follows the bibliography. A list of 12 recommendations for parents and teachers interested in helping children cope with stress is given. Fifty-five references are included. (NB)

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AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE LITERATURE DEALING WITH HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND AND COPE WITH THEIR STRESS

by

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for the course E591 - Exit Project
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INTRODUCTION

In the minds of many, stress is the number one killer of modern times. Research has linked stress to many illnesses and diseases. It is clear that no one is free from stress until death. It is a part of everyone's daily life and cannot be totally avoided.

With society's emphasis on success, stress can begin at a very early age and continue throughout a person's life. Children who are experiencing stress may have difficulty concentrating, get poor grades in school, have trouble interacting, be hyperactive or withdrawn, and so on. The most likely physical manifestations are headaches, stomachaches, susceptibility to illness, teeth grinding, facial tics, and nightmares. Aggressiveness and school phobias may occur in children because of stress. Some may withdraw and become loners while some turn to gangs for security. Some turn to alcohol and/or drugs to escape from stressful feelings. In some cases, suicide is the action taken.

What causes children to feel stress? Children are troubled with problems at home because of divorce, separation, alcoholism, and early exposure to sex. Many times parental expectations place unreasonable demands on children. Our media-oriented society bombards children everyday with television programs and movies portraying children looking and acting grownup, and having grownup feelings and problems. Two - career families often create situations where children face more independence and responsibilities than they know how to handle.

School can also be a major source of pressure and stress for young people. Stress can result from labeling, grouping into ability levels, large classes, rushing from class to class, boredom, and the threat of violence.

Children can also be cruel to one another.

Stress is different for children because it may go unnoticed for quite some time which can be dangerous. The effects of stress are cumulative, and minor problems build up over time. Children also lack the skills necessary to determine what causes their stress and what they can do about it.

It is believed that parents need to learn about potential sources of stress for their children. They must help them learn how to deal effectively with stressful situations. Along with parents, teachers are significant adults in the lives of children and, therefore, need to implement methods of reducing stress for young people in their classrooms. Whatever can be done to alleviate stress in a child should be done, even if only one of several stress factors can be eliminated that would help that child gain control over his/her life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The harmful effects of stress on children have only begun to become apparent. The dramatic increase in child suicide, drug abuse, and violence are only a few of the signs of the stress with which children must deal. If parents and teachers, as primary caretakers, do not notice dramatic signs of stress in children, they could be unaware that the effects of stress can be cumulative. In addition, children may lack the intellectual skills necessary to determine what is causing stress and what to do about it. Parents and teachers need to become more familiar with the symptoms of stress, and how they can help children learn how to deal effectively with stressful situations.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Children today are bombarded on all sides by potential stress-provoking situations. There is more to learn, more to worry about; there are more choices, more temptations, and more pressures from family and peers. The importance of stress management techniques for adults is well known and well publicized. This study was done to examine stress management techniques for children. It examined and evaluated possible techniques for helping children learn about their stress and develop stress defenses that would enable them to grow into well-adjusted adults. Parents and teachers were identified as the adults in children's lives who have a joint responsibility to provide a nurturing environment for young people in their care. A "team approach" was used throughout the study when speaking of significant adults in the lives of the children.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of making this study of children's stress meaningful, the research that was used began with early studies of stress and the problems defining it. Common stressors for children followed and the effects that they produced in young people were examined.

Following the overview of stress, studies and literature concerning children's stress were discussed. Family-related stressors (limited to those relating to divorce and alcoholism) and school-related stressors were identified and intervention methods were cited.

The third area of study was stress management techniques. Studies

of children who cope and seem invulnerable were included as well as relaxation techniques and other activities for reducing tension and anxiety. The important role that teachers and parents have in helping children learn more about their stress and ways of dealing with it was the final area of research explored.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Many of the researchers in this study explained that they used instruments that had not been standardized and used subjects in their studies that were self-selected. These factors were limitations in their individual findings, but, overall, their results were found to be relevant and were included in this study.

Stressors in children's lives were not all inclusive because of the numerous areas that could potentially cause stress for individuals. Illness, hospitalization, child abuse and neglect, latchkey children, and many others were not used for this study. The family-related stress found in divorce and alcoholism were the two major areas explored, and only in relation to how adults in the lives of these children could help in some way. Other effects of stress, such as the use of alcohol and drugs, and many other physical problems of stress were not explored.

With no professional background in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy, evaluation of findings in these areas was not included.

GLOSSARY

acute stress -- "stresses that arise suddenly, are isolated instances, and their impact may not last long." (Honig, Part 1, 1986: 51)

adolescent -- "a boy or girl aged 11 through 18." (Yeaworth 1980: 94)

anxiety -- "apprehension, tension, or uneasiness characterized by fear, dread, or uncertainty, the source of which is largely unknown or unrecognized by the individual." (Good 1973: 34)

child -- "Strictly, a person between infancy and adolescence." (Good 1973: 94)

chronic stress -- "stresses that may be cumulative and can lead to long-term disturbances." (Honig, Part 1, 1986: 51)

coping -- "a feeling of being capable, calm, confident, and able to meet a challenge." (Saunders and Remsberg 1984: 21)

distress -- "the result of negative, nonconstructive, or maladaptive responses to stressful life events." (Schultz and Heuchert 1983: 22)

eustress -- "the result of proactive, positive, or adaptive responses to stressful life events." (Schultz and Heuchert 1983: 22)

fear -- "an acute affective upset characterized by an impulse to flee or escape from the inducing situation; to be distinguished from anxiety, which is persisting." (Good 1973: 237)

General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S.) -- "the manifestations of stress in the whole body, as they develop in time. Includes three distinct stages: alarm reaction, stage of resistance, stage of exhaustion." (Selye 1974: 139)

homeostasis -- "the body's tendency to maintain a steady state despite external changes; physiological 'staying power' " (Selye 1974: 139)

life change events -- "a variety of personal, social, family, and occupational life changes which required adjustment of the adolescent." (Yeaworth 1980: 94)

preschooler -- "a child below kindergarten age." (Good 1973: 435)

pupil -- "one who attends a kindergarten or a school of elementary level." (Good 1973: 461)

quieting reflex (QR) -- "a remedial technique used for self-regulation of tension in the body." (Danielson 1984: 153)

relaxation therapy -- "a method of treatment that seeks to eliminate unnecessary muscular tensions and strains, using such techniques as light manipulation of the muscles, deep massage, alternate tensing and relaxing of muscles, concentration on peaceful thoughts and images, and listening to quiet music." (Good 1973: 608)

resilience -- "the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or sustained life stress." (Werner 1984: 68)

resources -- "those things that help a family cope with a stressful event." (Walker 1985: 830)

school stress -- "anything that a student perceives as a threat - either to his/her survival or to his/her self-image." (Schultz and Heuchert 1983: 23)

stress -- "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it; the common results of exposure to any stimulus." (Selye 1974: 141)

stress resistance -- "the manifestations of competence in children despite exposure to stressful events." (Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen 1984: 98)

stressor -- "an acute life event or a chronic environmental situation that causes disequilibrium in the individual." (Blom 1986: 3)

success imagery (SI) -- "the reading of a script designed to help imagine feeling comfortable and confident about an upcoming event." (Danielson 1984: 154)

symptom -- "a condition that develops in the body as a result of a problem." (Herzfeld and Powell 1986: 5)

test anxiety -- "the student's negative, self-centered worry response in testing situations that is related to poor performance on ability and achievement measures." (Forman and O'Malley 1984: 163)

ANNOTATIONS

OVERVIEW OF STRESS
DEFINING STRESS IN CHILDREN

Arent, Ruth P. Stress and Your Child. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

This handbook gave the reader specific strategies for helping children cope with problems they encounter with all types of stress - from the normal challenges of youth to the unexpected traumas that dramatically change their lives. Stress was defined by discussing good stress, the pressure or emotional condition that motivates and promotes positive results, and painful stress, the emotional condition that was felt when coping with frustration, harm, helplessness, or even futility. Even painful stress could have benefits, however. Arent classified stressors as non-traumatic or traumatic. The traumatic stressors were sudden or severe. The adjustments children make were their coping styles. Indicators of stress were named symptoms which vary from child to child and from situation to situation. Parenting and management skills were discussed, along with traumatic and non-traumatic sources of stress. Examples of unsuccessful coping, and recognizing the need for professional help were explained. A comprehensive list of references and community resources was included.

Chandler, Louis A., Children Under Stress. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1985.

For the purpose of identifying potentially stressful occurrences in life, Chandler developed an instrument called the Children's Life Events Inventory. (p.42) By using this inventory, Chandler found it possible to determine how many potentially stressful events the child might have experienced and what the events were. Chandler also discussed his development of a questionnaire used with parents - the Structured Parent Interview. This instrument was developed to be used in a clinical assessment with parents, and was designed to give specific information on the impact of stress in major areas of the child's functioning. (p.45) Another model discussed was the Stress Assessment System which provided a way of comprehensively examining a child's experience with stress. (p.47) Cases and vignettes were used as illustrations throughout the book. One message Chandler gave to teachers was that as professionals working with children, they should not be seen as mental health professionals or counselors. The teacher's primary role was to teach, and the child's mental health was largely the responsibility of the parents. However, in addition to being a teacher, that person was also seen as a significant adult in the child's life. In that role, teachers could do much to help children cope effectively.

Chandler, Louis A., "The Source of Stress Inventory," Psychology in the Schools, April, 1981, 18: 164-168.

Chandler found that children may respond to emotional distress in various ways. "One child may turn inward, another may act out." (p.164) Emotional problems were viewed as extreme patterns of behavior adopted in response to stress. Psychological stress came from two main conditions: "(a) failure of the environment to meet the needs of the individual, or (b) environmental demand." (p.164) A rating of severity of these psychological stressors was Chandler's recommended assessment procedure. Mental health professionals in the western Pennsylvania area who worked primarily with children and teachers from graduate classes at the University of Pittsburgh were asked to participate in a study designed to establish the relative severity of 37 life events of elementary school-age children usually associated with some degree of negative stress. Each participant was asked to rate the events on a scale of zero to twenty, with the higher scores being more stressful. They were told to try to base their opinion on the average degree of stress. A close agreement was found between the two groups. The scores of both groups were combined and used to establish the rankings for a stress inventory. This inventory could be used as a checklist of sources of stress for children seen by professionals for emotional adjustment problems. Chandler stated that used regularly with each referral, such an inventory could assure that significant sources of potential stress would not be overlooked during the assessment.

Duncan, David F., Stress and Children: A Theoretical Overview, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 230 542, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education Recreation, and Dance, Minneapolis, MN, April 10, 1983.

Duncan summarized stress research and found that stress could damage the body in at least two ways. First, it could damage the tissues - especially in the circulatory system. Second, it could suppress the body's defenses against disease. Children were found to be exposed to a wide variety of stress, some of which could include: birth of a sibling, entering school, change in residence, parent's marital problems, adoption, and illness. Children who experienced stress overload were those who lacked strong coping skills, and were often "Type A" (coronary prone) personalities. A variety of ways to help children cope were suggested. Adults could work on improved communication, increased understanding of child development, planning in anticipation of stressful events, teaching problem solving skills, and teaching relaxation techniques.

Holmes, Thomas H., and Richard H. Raye, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale, " Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 1967, 11: 213-218.

Holmes and Raye developed a scale of magnitude for common life events that required changes in life patterns. Their work was based on the research of Adolph Meyer and Harold G. Wolff, both of whom had found similar occurrences of high stress life events in their parents with major illnesses. The authors asked "394 subjects to rate the average degree of readjustment necessary" (p.213) of 43 life events, comparing each of them to an average value of 500 points for marriage. The life events were basically of two types - those that involved changes in lifestyle, and those that came about from a specific happening to, or involving the person. Importance was placed on the changes and adjustments that were necessary, not the meaning or desirability of the event. Positive events could be viewed as stressful as negative events. The results showed a basic agreement among the subjects, regardless of sex, age, race, or social class. The events were ranked and a point value assigned to each. The authors determined that the scale would be useful for psychophysics and in psychotherapy.

Rubenzer, Ronald L., "Stress: Causes and Cures in Gifted Kids, "Gifted Children Monthly, March, 1986,7:1-3.

In Rubenzer's experience as a school psychologist, he found that gifted children were particularly susceptible to stress and resultant burnout. He defined stress as energy - both positive and negative. In his study, he referred to "stress" as negative stress (distress), anxiety, or pressure and "burnout" to a state of mental/physical exhaustion resulting from prolonged, unrelieved stress. He observed that by fourth grade it was very difficult for children to reverse the harmful effects of stress and anxiety on creative thinking. Children began to display "Type A" personality characteristics: tension, extreme certain psychosomatic illnesses: headaches, stomachaches, and depression. Rubenzer's studies showed that gifted students could become so practiced at underachievement that they could become "rusty" or even incapable of achieving at their potential. He went on to cite his "ABC's of Stress Management" which were three tools with which to cope better with achievement anxiety: attitudes, behaviors, and circumstances.

Selye, Hans. The Stress of Life. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956.

Selye's basic foundations with regard to the study of stress were expressed in this text. He stated that no one could live without experiencing some degree of stress. It was not even necessarily bad, and he even called it "the spice of life." He found that physiologically, we react to life events that are perceived as potentially threatening in a standard manner called the general adaptation syndrome (G.A.S.). It included: (a) the alarm reaction in which the body's defense system was mobilized; (b) the stage of resistance and adaptation, in which the body strove to ward off or adjust to the stressor; and (c) the stage of exhaustion which occurred as the final phase of reaction to a stressor or to stress over a prolonged period of time. (p.31-32) The nervous system and the endocrine (or hormonal) system played particularly important parts in maintaining resistance during stress. They helped to keep the structure and function of the body steady. This was known as homeostasis. (p.3)

COMMON STRESSORS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Chandler, Louis A. Assessing Stress in Children. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985.

A study of stress and a review of the research was compiled for this study of stress in children. Initial studies were concerned with the effects of the emotions or bodily functions, and with the impact of traumatic events. The study began to be seen in a broader context. "The major sources of childhood stress were normal developmental stresses, endemic social stress, and specific traumatic events and situations." (p.61) Intervention with children should consist of one or more of these agents of change: (1) significant adults as agents of change; (2) counseling with the parents and children; (3) neuromuscular relaxation; (4) systematic desensitization, and (5) cognitive - behavioral techniques. In addition, biofeedback and relaxation techniques were among those that focused on eliminating some particular dysfunction. (p.185-199)

Elkind, David. "Hurried Children: Stressed Children. "In The Hurried Child. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1981, pp.141-163.

Elkind reported that Sigmund Freud gave the first understanding of emotional illness. Basically, Freud found that disturbed human behavior arose out of conflict and this conflict was a major cause of emotional distress. Stressed children were described by Elkind. One example given was the child who was stressed by responsibility overload caused by living in a one-parent home and having to assume parental responsibilities. Children of today have had to endure more overload because of working parents and divorce of parents. Schools have stressed children by stereotyping them, and impeding effective learning. Media could stress children by giving them too much information for which they are not intellectually or emotionally ready. A stress test for children was included.

Falk, Maurice, and Carolyn, "Signs and Signals of Early Adolescent Stress," The Early Adolescent Magazine, September, 1986, 1:4-6.

Three case studies of adolescents were presented and studied. They all exhibited signs of an abnormal amount of stress. It was stated that what made a difference between common and more severe stress was the intensity of the stressful situation and the ability to cope. One author was a physician and the other a teacher. The physician found that frequent headaches and stomachaches were common symptoms of stress, while the teacher found that students acting out, dropping grades, or showing a high rate of absenteeism commonly showed signs of increased stress. One case study was that of a boy whose parents were separating, and he felt betrayed. He could not listen. He was afraid that he was the cause of his family's destruction. He bottled up many fears and emotions. The second case study was that of a girl who exhibited perfectionism and anorexia nervosa. Her teacher and doctor needed to address her problems cooperatively with her parents. The third case study was an abused boy whose mother was afraid to speak out against her husband. Once again, a team approach was needed in order to design a management plan. It was emphasized that the child had the most to gain or lose, and that he or she should have a decided part in the solution to his/her problem. (p.6)

Honig, Alice Sterling, "Stress and Coping in Children (Part 1),"Young Children, May, 1986, 41: 50-63.

Honig's research was a review of the components and stages of stress. Hans Selye's definition of stress was used: "a stimulus event of sufficient severity to produce disequilibrium in the homeostatic physiological systems". (p.51) A variety of dissimilar situations that happen to children were found to produce stress. The stress could arise from internal or external factors with some being acute: those that arise suddenly, are isolated instances, and their impact would not last long. Other stresses were defined as chronic which may be cumulative and can lead to long-term disturbances. Another important definition stated by Honig was that of a "stressor"; "an acute life event or a chronic environmental situation that causes disequilibrium" (Blom, p.52). The severity of the stress was found to depend partly on how a child understands and feels about the stressor.

Several stages of response were examined: (1) Stage of alarm - that initial alarm reaction referred to by Selye as a "general adaptation syndrome"; (2) Stage of appraisal, the evaluative process that creates meaning for a person; (3) Stage of searching for a coping strategy; and (4) Stage of implementing coping responses. Six categories of stress factors have been and continue to be seen in children's lives: personal child variables, ecological stressors, socioeconomic status, catastrophes and terrors, family events, and spouse problems.

Lefkowitz, Monroe M., and Edward P. Tesiny, "Depression in Children: Prevalence and Correlates," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, October, 1985, 53: 647-656.

This research was done to assess the prevalence of severe depression in children according to four risk variables: Sex, age, intellectual functioning, and family income. Data were collected from 3,020 children by using peer nominations, self-ratings, teachers' observations, and pupil personnel records. In addition to this, data from 508 of the children's mothers were obtained from interviews. The depression rate based on peer nominations was 5.2 percent. Eighteen of the 38 variables that were hypothesized correlated with the peer nomination measure. In accord with other findings for children this age, it was suggested that prior to puberty, sex was not yet a risk factor for depression. The finding that risk for severe depression existed at lower and upper levels of income had no counterpart in other childhood depression research. Most studies had found that depression and income were inversely related. It remained unknown whether poor academic achievement was the antecedent or consequence of depressive symptoms.

Lundberg, Ulf, "Stress and Type A Behavior in Children, "Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, November, 1986, 25: 771-778.

This study examined developmental aspects of Type A behavior and physiological stress responses in children. Physiological stress was said to be "an interactional process between the individual and his or her environment." (p.771) The intensity of this stress was usually considered to be determined as a function of the individual's perceived capabilities to meet these demands. Type A individuals were characterized by an excessive drive , an extreme sense of time urgency, competitiveness, and aggression/hostility. (p.773) Research using different measures of Type A behavior for children were discussed. The Matthews Youth Test for Health (MYTH) scale was used in a series of studies and proved to be a highly reliable and valid measure of a child's behavior pattern. A Swedish scale, based on the MYTH questionnaire, has been developed for studying Type A behavior in preschool children. All studies mentioned found that antecedents of Type A behavior could be found at an early age. Type A-like behavior in childhood was found to likely be predictive of adult Type A behavior. (p.775) Higher Type A scores were found in boys than in girls. It was also determined that individual, psychobiological characteristics and specific environmental demands under certain conditions mutually enhanced each other and contributed to increased illness risks.

Orbach, Israel, et al, "Attitudes Toward Life and Death in Suicidal,Normal, and Chronically Ill Children: An Extended Replication, "Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, December, 1984, 52: 1020-1027.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the attitudes toward life and death held by suicidal, chronically ill, and normal children (N=84). The procedure was based on the evaluation of four attitudes toward life and death: attraction to life,repulsion by life, attraction to death, and repulsion by death. Fairy tales were used to represent each of the four attitudes. The children responded to questions following the fairy tales. Parallel forms of the test were administered in six week intervals. Each group had a unique response profile that differentiated it from the others. The response profiles of the suicidal and normal children were almost identical to those obtained in a previous study. The reliability measures for the entire group were significant; however, the reliability measures for chronically ill children were considerably lower than those for the other two groups. It was of great interest to the authors that suicidal and chronically ill children, in spite of their suffering, did not lose their attraction to life. The model studied introduced the patterns of attitudes toward life and death as a tool for diagnosing suicidal tendencies in young children.

Rosenthal, Perlhan A. and Stuart, "Suicide Among Preschoolers; Fact or Fallacy?" Children Today, November-December, 1983, 12:22-24.

Suicidal behavior was recorded by clinicians in children at age five or six, which raised the possibility that uncompleted suicides were only a fraction of actual suicides misdiagnosed as accidental deaths. One author identified suicidal behavior in seven children under age five from a population of about 600 children over a three year period. All of the seven preschoolers had experienced separation from one or both parents, and four had lived in foster homes. All of the placements resulted from physical abuse. Two case studies were given which illustrated intentional death-seeking behavior, one age four and the other two years, ten months at the time. The experiences of the authors led them believe that there was a strong need to investigate alleged accidents in preschool-age children, especially in the presence of increased family stress and/or depressive symptoms. The children seen had suffered overwhelming disturbances in their relations with key caretakers prior to their suicidal behavior. It was suggested that there is considerable professional skepticism that this age group was even capable of such behavior. However, the authors felt that it was a phenomenon that had significant public health implications, and should be diagnosed accurately and thoroughly with more investigation and interviewing.

Selye, Hans. Stress Without Distress, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1974.

After several more decades of research was completed, Selye compiled results to write another book after his original work, The Stress of Life. Selye examined more closely what stress was not. It was found to not be merely nervous tension. It was not always the nonspecific result of damage, nor was it something to be avoided. No matter what happened, there was a demand for the necessary energy required to maintain life. Even while fully relaxed and asleep, a person would be under stress, for the heart would pump blood, the intestines would continue to digest the last meal, and the muscles move the chest for respiration. Even the brain would not be at rest. Complete freedom from stress would be death. More of this study was then dedicated to the discussion of motivation and the aim of life, including the short-term and long-term goals needed to make a commitment to enjoyment of a full life.

Shrier, Diane, "Children and Stress: Sources, Reactions, and Interventions," Day Care and Early Education, Summer, 1984, 11:10-13.

Shrier discussed common childhood stress and the more severe stresses of hospitalization, surgery, chronic illness or handicap, the disruption of the family through separation and divorce, the death of a parent, or violence in the family such as physical or sexual abuse. Most stress that had been overwhelming at the time was found to have the potential for benefical effects, as well as the potential for damage. The risks involved in childhood stress were greater when the stress was found to be ongoing or too overwhelming for a particular child. The child was then found to deviate from normal development and would begin to develop more chronic emotional or behavioral difficulties. Shrier identified a "Difficult Child" type who was the most vulnerable to stress. (p.11) That child was biologically irregular, had a predominantly negative mood, expressed feelings with high intensity, withdrew from new stimuli and was slow to adapt. Such a child's problems were compounded by the negative reactions stirred up in the parents who felt responsible for the child's behavior. Shrier went on to recommend helpful interactions for parents, physicians, and teachers to use with children. One suggestion given to strengthen a child's capacity to cope was a form of psychological immunity which allowed a child to experience a stressful event at a low-dose level as a way of helping to tolerate higher dose stresses.

Webb, Thomas E., et al., " A Comparative Study of Affective Distress in Elementary School Children and Adolescents, "Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, February, 1984, 18: 188-193.

The authors' research over several years led them to question the validity of considering adolescence as a unique developmental stage of greater emotional stress than any other stage. It seemed to them that elementary school children were aware of stresses they confront and that their level of distress might even exceed that of the adolescent. Assessment of emotional state at any age was difficult because of its subjectivity. Pupils from nine public schools in Ohio (N=1015) volunteered to respond to the Structured Pediatric Psychosocial Interview (SPPI). The sample was divided into age groups (5 to 7, 8 to 10, 11 to 13, 14 to 16, 17 to 19). Racial composition was rather homogeneous across the groups. Each participant received nine scores. Reliabilities were quite high (Spearman-Brown formula for all scales were 0.90 or above). The results showed a trend toward more significant affective distress in elementary students than adolescents in four of nine attributes. When asked identical questions with the structured SPPI format, elementary school children gave descriptions of their distress with greater frequency than adolescents on eight of the nine affective variables measured. It seemed to the authors that vulnerability to stress may well be augmented in the elementary school years. Teachers and counselors may well be called on to fill the vacuum created by the increasing breakdown in the primary unit - the family. Helping teachers to better understand and detect emotional needs of their pupils was recommended.

Yamamoto, Kaoru, and Deborah A. Byrnes, "Classroom Social Status Ethnicity, and Ratings of Stressful Events, " Journal of Educational Research, May/June, 1984, 77: 283-286.

In this study, ethnic membership and classroom social status were examined in relation to the ratings of stressful experiences among 273 children in fourth through sixth grades. Of these, 61.2 percent were Hispanic, and 32.2 percent Anglo. Three instruments were administered in the regular classroom setting: first, a sociometric form on which children were asked "Who, among your classmates, are your friends?" and they listed three or more names; second, a stressful life event scale was used, originated by Yamamoto, (1979) which listed twenty events to be rated on a seven point continuum; and third, a self-anchoring scale on the self-in-time was used in which the student described the "best" and "worst" person they could think of and where they fit on the scale two years ago, currently, and where they wish to be in two years. (p.284) All three social status groups studied tended to agree in their assessment of experiences regarded as very stressful, for example, losing a parent, parental fights, and academic retainment. However, each group appeared to "have its own cross to bear." (p.286) The Anglo children seemed to feel more successful as students, but they were also more anxious. The Hispanic children found the tasks of schooling and its individual competitive settings harder to handle.

Yeaworth, Rosalee C., et al., " The Development of an Adolescent Life Change Event Scale," Adolescence, Spring, 1980, 15:91-98.

The purpose of this study was to develop a life change event scale which utilized items of importance to adolescents and which were rated by adolescents. The question to be answered was: "How do adolescents rate life change events in terms of the amount of stress created by them?" (p.94) Adolescents were defined as boys and girls aged eleven through eighteen. A total of 207 subjects participated in the study. There were 78 males and 129 females with a mean age of 14.1 and a mean grade of 8.4. Forty percent were from a senior high school and sixty percent were from a junior high in the same district. The subjects were a non-randomized voluntary sample. They were asked to rate 31 personal, social, and family changes believed stressful to adolescents on a scale of one to five indicating how "upsetting" they believed the event was (p.96) and how many they had actually experienced. The Adolescent Life Change Event Scale was developed from this data. The results showed that events dealing with family problems were given high stress ratings. Failures in school also represented high stress. The study was admittedly limited by the fact that the subjects were self selected and primarily represented one race and the middle class socioeconomic level. The instrument had not been standardized so it constituted a limitation also. If a larger sample of adolescents were given the questionnaire, final weightings could be assigned, and this scale could be used to study relationships between life stress events and illness or other manifestations of stress in adolescents.

STUDIES AND LITERATURE CONCERNING CHILDREN'S STRESS
FAMILY-RELATED STRESSORS

Cantrell, Roslyn Garden, " Adjustment to Divorce: Three Components To Assist Children," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, February, 1986, 20: 163-173.

Cantrell's study is a summary of the work of Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980, in which, after several years of research and observation, the conclusion was reached that divorce is very stressful for most children, and that although there is much variance, all children affected by divorce need at least some supportive services for awhile. At ages six to eight, children were found to not have the capacity to understand their parents' needs as separate from their own. The most striking responses were found to be pervasive sadness and fright dealt with by living unrealistic fantasies. Children of this age group usually continued to be loyal to both parents, which caused them considerable pain. At ages nine to twelve, the children responded differently by showing more intense anger than the younger group. An alignment with one parent helped the child cope with feelings of loneliness, sadness, and depression. Many at this age experienced confusion, and had more headaches, and stomachaches linked to parental conflict and visits. A three-component model of divorce counseling was discussed which involved group counseling for children of divorced parents, two educational sessions with both parents, if possible, and a one-session workshop with the child's teachers to (a) portray divorce as a normal experience, (b) to share information about responses to divorce in relation to school, and (c) to recommend ways that teachers can help children cope with the divorce process. (p.171) Specific ways to help the child were covered and curriculum methods to enhance adjustment were shared.

Freeman, Evelyn B., "When Children Face Divorce: Issues and Implications of Research, "Childhood Education, November/December, 1985, 62: 130-136.

The purpose of this article was to explore the issue of divorce as it related to the elementary school educator. Research describing the effects of divorce on children was presented. Hetherington (1979) found that almost all children experienced the transition of divorce as painful. (p.132) Four most common characteristics of children in the immediate post-divorce situation were found to be guilt, fear, anger, and depression. Ideas to help teachers work with children of divorce were discussed. The teacher needed to be aware of changes in behavior, attitude, and performance. That teacher might need to serve as a support system for the parent as well as the child. Some children, who evidence more pronounced and severe problems, may need to be referred to a school psychologist. The teacher and school together were found to be needed as a positive force in helping children understand and accept their new family situations caused by divorce.

Kinard, E. Milling and Helen Reinherz, " Effects of Marital Disruption on Childrens' School Aptitude and Achievement," Journal of Marriage and the Family, May, 1986, 48: 285-293.

The subjects in this study were fourth-grade children who were examined by comparing children in three types of families to see the effects of marital disruption on academic aptitude and achievement: (1) early disrupted single-mother, (2) recently disrupted single-mother, and (3) never disrupted two-parent families. Data was collected from parent questionnaires at pre-school screenings and again after third grade, and the children were given standardized tests of cognitive ability at preschool screening and of academic aptitude and achievement at grade 4. The findings indicated that children in recently disrupted families were likely to have more problems in certain areas of school performance than children in early disturbed or in never disturbed families. The authors found that "marital disruption resulted in increased problems of attention, withdrawal, dependency, and hostility for children in recently disrupted families. It may be that these problems then interfered with school performance." (p.291) The authors recommended that preventive intervention aimed at reducing the occurrence of problems in school performance would be useful. Support groups could be offered in school settings to children of recently disrupted families.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "Helping Children From Alcoholic Families: Approaches and Caregivers," Children Today, January/February, 1986, 15: 13-16.

This report was adapted from Chapter II of A Growing Concern: How to Provide Services for Children from Alcoholic Families, published by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and distributed by the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol Information. It outlined an overview of the problems and needs of children of alcoholics, discussed approaches to meeting these needs, and examine organizational and cultural issues in providing services to children of alcoholic families. Caregiving was defined as the competence to see past the symptoms of living in an alcoholic family, such as child abuse, incest, troubled behavior, poor grades, school absences, and depression, and learn to identify family alcoholism as the problem. Caregivers were given suggestions on reaching and helping children in these situations in a variety of settings, including schools and youth groups as well as specialized treatment centers.

Walker, Alexis J., " Reconceptualizing Family Stress, "Journal of Marriage and the Family, November, 1985, 47: 827-837.

Hill's (1949) model of studying family stress was the organizing framework for an examination of critical issues outstanding in the area of families under stress. Stress was defined as "a phenomenon that produces change in the family system." (p.828) These were called "events" or "crises" by Hill, also. He classified them by internal/external, crisis type, and crisis severity. He suggested that "resources" were those things that help a family cope with a stressful event. (p.830) In Hill's study, he discussed the importance of individual resources, coping responses, and family resources. Walker's study of this model led to a realization that research on family stress "has not usually attended to the differing contexts of stress - the "macro" variables - and the unique perspectives and resources of individual family members related to those contexts." (p.833) Walker recommended that new models be developed in which descriptive data is used to generate hypotheses regarding change over time. Research from a broader perspective would add to the general knowledge about the development of individuals and families.

Weddle, Charles D., and Phillip M. Wishon, "Children of Alcoholics," Children Today, January/February, 1986, 15: 8-12.

This article established the significance of the problem of the estimated seven million children who are growing up in alcoholic home environments. The authors identified characteristics that should serve to alert caregivers that alcoholism may be a source of the problem. Three categories of characteristics were discussed: general, physical, and emotional. Children of alcoholics were found to assume one of four roles identified as the hero, the scapegoat, the lost child, or the mascot. (p.9) They assumed these roles as a result of parental inconsistency. A list of other general characteristics was given. Other physical considerations were cited such as the fact that as few as two drinks per day increased the chances for children to be born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the third largest cause of mental retardation. (p.10) Healthy emotional development was often impeded. This was found to be because one of the most basic of human needs, the need for security, went unsatisfied in alcoholic homes. Often the school setting was the only source of security and stability for them. Experiences that enhance self-esteem should be provided, those working with the children should become more educated and more understanding about the disease of alcoholism, age-appropriate alcohol awareness programs should be developed, and referrals to other agencies should be provided if deemed necessary.

Arena, Corinne, Joan Hermann, and Tanya Hoffman, "Helping Children Deal with the Death of a Classmate: A Crisis Intervention Model," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, December, 1984, 19: 107-115.

A second-grade student from an urban, parochial school was murdered while returning home from a store one evening. This study described a consultation model of crisis intervention developed in cooperation with significant members of the community in which the young child had been murdered (counselor, principal, and teachers). The school counselor met with the principal, with a consultant with expertise in childhood bereavement, and with the teachers to discuss the crisis and develop a response. The victim's classmates met with the consultant to ask questions about death and express their own fears and concerns. They then developed their own memorial service. The authors felt that this would facilitate understanding of the event, begin an exceptance of the loss, and allow them to express their grief. The dead child's mother, two brothers, and the principal attended the service. The evaluation phase consisted of a follow-up meeting with the class and a meeting with the classroom parents. Children in crisis, especially those in the primary grades, were found to often imitate the coping behaviors of their parents. (p.112) Therefore, direct parental involvement was seen as an essential part of this intervention. The conclusion was that in the absence of these interventions, the children would have struggled in isolation and would have struggled with immature perceptions of life and death characteristic of their age. Instead, the children were given an example of the system meeting its responsibility to demonstrate how to think, feel, and participate in life. (p.115)

Asher, Steven R., and Valerie A. Wheeler, "Children's Loneliness: A Comparison of Rejected and Neglected Peer Status, " Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, August, 1985, 53: 500-505.

This study was done to assess feelings of loneliness of two subgroups of unpopular children, those who were sociometrically rejected who lacked friends in class and were actively disliked by many of their peers versus those who were sociometrically neglected who lacked friends but were not disliked by their peers. Data on popular, average, and controversial children were also collected. Previous research had indicated that a considerable number of children reported extreme feelings of loneliness and that unpopular children were more lonely than popular children. Results from 200 third through sixth grade children showed that rejected children were the most lonely group and that this group differed significantly from other status groups. Neglected children did not differ from higher status peers. All together, the results provided additional evidence of the importance of distinguishing neglected versus rejected status, and they also provided support for earlier conclusions that rejected children are more at risk than other groups are. Large individual differences remained to be understood.

Blom, Gaston E., Bruce D. Cheney, and James E. Snoddy, "School-Related Stressors." In Stress in Childhood; An Intervention Model for Teachers and Other Professionals. New York: Teachers College Press, 1986, pp.118-140.

In this chapter, school stressors were examined in relation to various school issues and practices. Aggressive behaviors in schools were found to be sources of stress for children. Those behaviors included peer bullying, antisocial peer pressure, teacher intimidation, threat and punishment, unruly classrooms and playgrounds, and destruction of school property. (p.118) Corporal punishment in schools has still been accepted as public policy. As of 1985 there were only seven states where corporal punishment was banned in schools. (p.112) It was felt that punishment in schools supported the message of violence in the society, and of violence as a way of dealing with stress. Peer relationships was another school-related stressor. Among the most damaging peer interactions were those of bullying and victimizing, and were areas in need of teacher intervention. Oliveus (1978) found that in any class about five percent were bullies and another five percent were victims. (p.128) Victims were encouraged to be assertive and to have competencies other than those that relied on physical powers. Children with disabilities were others who faced extreme stress. Academic pressure and excessive competition were also addressed as well as the increase in family mobility and the added demands and pressures this placed on children.

Crowley, Jeremiah A., "Worries of Elementary School Students," Elementary School Guidance And Counseling, December,1981, 16: 98-102.

Crowley began his study with the assumption that when school personnel and family members are aware of the concerns of student, they can take steps that will help them cope with life and enjoy happiness. (p.98) A distinction was made between the terms stress and anxiety. Anxiety was "what people feel when stress is placed on them." (p.98) Stress was "the cognitive component of anxiety that generally brings about lowered levels of performance." (p.98) This cognitive element was termed worry by the author. The purpose of his study was to determine what elementary school students worried about most. The sample consisted of 438 students from third grade through eighth grade with a random selection including 218 males and 228 females. Crowley found that the percentage of students who worried about grades was consistently high across grade levels. Over half of the students worried about physical harm to themselves or loved ones. An effective approach, according to Crowley, was to teach children how to relax. It was pointed out that persons who are physically relaxed cannot be anxious. The author suggested that school programs include relaxation training so that children can channel their energy from worrying into higher levels of performance, problem solving, and happier living. (p.102)

Dendato, Kenneth M., and Don Diener, " Effectiveness of Cognitive/ Relaxation Therapy and Study-Skills Training in Reducing Self-Reported Anxiety and Improving the Academic Performance of Test-Anxious Students," Journal of Counseling Psychology, April, 1986, 33: 131-135.

Studies of the relation between test anxiety and impaired academic performance were discussed as well as the failure of behavioral therapies to improve academic performance. The results of cognitive therapies have been more encouraging and some have been successful in reducing self-reported anxiety. According to some, test-anxious students had poor study habits and that test-anxiety was largely the result of past failures. This study was designed to determine whether study-skills training contributed to a treatment program that included both relaxation training and cognitive therapy. The Test-Anxiety Inventory was administered to 400 undergraduates enrolled at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Students with scores of 50 and above were asked to participate. Three treatment techniques were used in the study. (1) cognitive therapy, (2) deep muscle relaxation, and (3) study-skills training. One treatment group received a combination of cognitive therapy and deep muscle relaxation. A second group received treatment consisting of all three techniques; a third group received only study-skills training; and a control group received no treatment. The results indicated relaxation/cognitive therapy was effective in reducing anxiety but failed to improve classroom scores; study-skills training had no significant effect. The combined therapy both reduced anxiety and improved performance relative to the no-treatment condition and was significantly more effective than was either treatment alone.

Forman, Susan G., and Patricia L. O'Malley, "School Stress and Anxiety Interventions, "School Psychology Review, Winter, 1984, 13: 162-170.

School settings were found to likely be sources of stress because they provided a context in which performance and relationship demands were made. The stress associated with school constituted a large portion of the total stress of children and adolescents because they spend a major portion of their waking hours in school. Phillips (1978) identified two major categories of stressors for students: (1) achievement stressors, and (2) social stressors. (p.162) Highly anxious students were found to engage in more problem behavior, were disliked by their peers, had poorer self-concepts, and were lower in school achievement and school aptitude. The effects of teacher stress included a variety of negative reactions. Most importantly, there had been some evidence of a relationship between teacher stress and/or anxiety and poor student-teacher relationships, poor student adjustment, and poor student achievement. (p.162) Treatments of student stress and anxiety were reviewed. Relaxation training promoted anxiety reduction by teaching the individual to reduce muscle tension through training in which various muscle groups are systematically tensed and relaxed. A number of studies had shown that systematic desensitization could be effective in the treatment of test-anxiety in students. (p.163) Cognitive-behavioral interventions appeared to be appropriate for treatment of students' social interaction anxiety. (p.168) Preventive programs were determined to possibly be more beneficial than intervention approaches in the long run.

Hunter, William J., "Getting Wise to Test Anxiety," School Guidance Worker, March, 1985, 40: 12-16.

This article attempted to show that when studying the problem of test anxiety, focusing on the tests may be the best way of reducing the anxiety. The opposite of test anxiety was thought of as test-wiseness and was defined as "the ability to correctly answer questions in the absence of knowledge about the content of the question." (p.13) Some researchers have attempted to distinguish between "facilitative" and "debilitative" test anxiety to determine if moderate levels of test anxiety could be conducive to better performance. (p.13) Hunter discussed two popular remedies that could lead to increased test-wiseness: relaxation training and study skills programs. Relaxation techniques were found to help reduce anxiety, but they did not eliminate or even reduce the environmental circumstances that brought on the anxiety. The student would have learned a way of coping with his internal state. On the other hand, students who learned study skills had a treatment which might serve to reduce the number of occassions on which they would encounter anxiety, yet they would not have learned how to deal with the inevitable situation of coping with questions for which they were not prepared. It was hoped that guidance counselors would see the value of including effective test-taking skills as part of their package for dealing with test anxiety.

Kersey, Katharine C., "School," In Helping Your Child Handle Stress. Wash., D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1986, pp.55-73.

Kersey devoted a chapter of her book to school-related stressors and how parents can best deal with them in their children. It was recommended that parents should seek an evironment for their child that is stimulating, exciting, and motivating. The goal for the child was to help him/her grow out of the need for parents and into a self-sufficient, dependable, competent adult and the time to start the process was while he/she was still young. Parents needed to involve themselves as much as possible in the child's school life, but only in a supportive role. The child who did not live up to the expectations set for them gave up early. Parents would see the first signs of this - wetting the bed, biting nails, complaining of stomachaches and headaches, or having nightmares. Recommendations were given for possible interventions by parents. Keeping communication open between child, teacher, administrator, and parent was most important. The parents were told "to exercise their parental rights and God-given intuition to find a situation for the child which will be right for him," (p.63) even if it meant changing schools. Degrees of school phobia were discussed and the accompanying physical symptoms noted. The unreasonable expectations parents often have of their children were examined, as well as the homework problems that many families experienced.

Matter, Darryl E., and Roxana Marie Matter, "Suicide Among Elementary School Children: A Serious Concern for Counselors," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, April, 1984, 18: 260-267.

The authors discussed the suicidal behavior of elementary school children. The incidence of suicide (attempted and actual) was discussed. Research conducted by C. Turkington was noted in which findings indicated that "about 12,000 children aged five to fourteen are admitted to psychiatric hospitals for suicidal behavior every year but this number could represent less than five percent of children who actually try to commit suicide." (p. 261) Many instances go unreported or are reported as accidents each year. The authors explored the many causes of children suicide. Suicidal children were more depressed, exhibited more "threatening" behavior, and family characteristics included more alcoholism, parental divorce, parental medical illness, and loss of grandparents. Early stress events in their lives combined with some type of loss were highly significant in childhood suicidal behavior. It was found that these children (1) must be taught better coping and problem-solving skills, and (2) the family must be given therapy. (p. 266) The authors stated that it was the responsibility of school staff members to immediately convey suicide threats of children to parents and counselors.

Moracco, John C., and Jack Camilleri, "A Study of Fears in Elementary School Children," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, December, 1983, 18: 82-87.

The purpose of this study was not only to see what fears existed in children today, but also if these fears differed depending upon the sex of the child. Previous research was cited which has produced conflicting results. Some studies showed a higher mean number of fears for girls than for boys. Continuous research was said to be needed because of the conflicting results. Fear was defined for the purposes of the study as "a mental or physical reaction to a danger or threat." (p. 83) The authors investigated the fears of 121 third graders from a rural Alabama school, 71 boys and 50 girls. About 30 percent of the students were black. Twenty items from a previous study (Croake, 1969) were used, and five other items added to make up a checklist that the children were asked to mark. They identified, anonymously, the items that they believed were frightening to them. The results showed that the girls were generally more fearful than boys. The loss of parents was the principal source of fear. Fears of natural phenomena (tornadoes and storms) and of animals resulted in the most consistency. The implications for treatment that were identified were family counseling, the use of play media, or "let's pretend," and systematic desensitization. Developmental strategies for working through fears could be accomplished in a classroom discussion. It would be very supportive for a child to recognize that others had the same or similar fears. It seemed that children experienced fear to a great extent. Counselors and teachers could and should help prevent many fears from becoming limiting factors for children when they become adults.

Nealis, James G., and Susan Miller, "School Problems and Other Factors in Childhood Headache Syndromes," Journal of Learning Disabilities, November, 1984, 17: 556-558.

The factors associated with childhood headache have been well studied. Many examples were cited. However, the authors felt that further research seemed to be indicated in efforts to identify new childhood headache factors. The purpose of this study was to analyze the factor of school problems in children with recurrent headaches. Fifty-four school-aged children ranging in age from five to seventeen were selected for the study based on the results of a neurological examination, patient history, and final diagnosis of headache as the primary disorder. (p. 556) Ten headache factors were included on a questionnaire that allowed for the recording of data from both past medical records and current patient/parent interviews. All subjects were examined by the same physician eliminating discrepancies in diagnosis. The results showed an apparent trend in the male/female distribution of headache disorders. The majority of subjects were male in elementary school with an increase of females with headaches in the teenage or high school group. There was a positive incidence of school problems in 46 percent of the subjects. This factor was used if the child had repeated one or more grades, experienced a marked change in grades, was barely passing or experiencing difficulty keeping up with assignments. A family history for headaches was present in 55 to 88 percent of the subjects. A cooperative effort should be made in teaching or treating a child with a headache disorder.

Schultz, Edward W., and Charles M. Heuchert. Child Stress and the School Experience. New York; Human Sciences Press, 1983.

The authors defined school stress as "anything that a student perceived as a threat - either to his/her survival or to his/her self-image." (p.23) It was recommended that any program or intervention designed to help children learn adaptive coping skills for managing stress include provisions for "(1) Developing an understanding of the whole child and his/her unique need to learn flexible self-management skills; (2) helping the child develop a cognitive awareness of the nature of anxiety and stress; and (3) helping the child to learn the process involved in personal problem solving." (p.62-63)

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
CHILDREN WHO COPE

Brenner, Avis. Helping Children Cope with Stress. Lexington,Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984.

Brenner attempted to synthesize the work that has been done on behalf of children with regard to the study of childhood stress. A summary of the nature of stress, sources of stress, and what could be done to help children cope with each kind of stress was included. " Research on childhood tension to date has been limited to negative experiences, " Brenner pointed out. (p.1) The nature of the stress that occurred when a child opened a gift or saw a coveted toy or visited a loved grandparent has not been studied. Coping with unexpected events has always involved mental and/or physical action. Young people learned coping modes from parents, peers, teachers, and relatives, and they weren't conscious of their own coping strategies. Four broad categories that described typical evasive action were: denial, regression, withdrawal, and impulsive acting out. Three helping strtategies used in the book to work with children under stress were: (1) remove at least one stressor; (2) teach new coping strategies, and (3) transfer some coping strategies to other life situations.

Duncan, Carolyn Wilkerson, "Coping With Stress," Day Care and Early Education, Spring, 1980, 7: 18-21.

Stress was defined as anything which interrupted the individual's psychological or biological rhythms. (p. 19) It was more prevalent than the common cold, and the effects of it could be felt throughout the body. Some stress was said to be good, even desirable, for it could cause an increase in productivity and creativity. It could be a motivational force. It was the prolonged, intense stress which caused mental or emotional breakdown. It worked adversely because it was an excitement which caused a chemical change in the body. Those chemical changes in turn produced physiological reactions such as an increase in the heart rate, blood pressure, perspiration, or pupil size. The prime sources of stress were identified as achievement, time pressures, and environment. All stress should not be avoided in an effort to help children cope with it. Normal development and social adjustments required that one be able to tolerate at least a minimal amount of stress. Teacher support should be extended, but always with the goal of developing within the child sufficient problem-solving abilities and the ability to see cause-and-effect relationships.

Garmezy, Norman, Ann S. Masten, and Auke Tellegen, "The Study of Stress and Competence in Children: A Building Block for Developmental Psychopathology, " Child Development, February, 1984, 55: 97-111.

A group of University of Minnesota investigators directed a Project Competence study. They decided to turn the project to a study of stress resistance in children. Stress resistance was defined as "the manifestations of competence in children despite exposure to stressful events." (p. 98) The study discussed building blocks for a developmental psychopathology, focusing on studies of risk, competence, and protective factors. The authors described studies of stress and competence, giving particular attention to methodology and strategies for data analysis. Three generic models for describing the impact of stress and personal attributes on quality of adaptation were suggested: the compensatory model, the challenge model, and finally a third model in which there was a conditional relationship between stress and personal attributes with respect to adaptation, called an immunity-versus-vulnerability model. Project Competence was evaluated in terms of further research. Many children did not succumb to deprivation, and it was deemed important that it be determined why this was so, and what it was that protected them from the hazards they faced.

Miller, Mary Susan, "Raising Children Who Cope." In Childstress! Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1982, pp. 220-240.

Miller referred to Selye's words when introducing this chapter: "Parents will greatly minimize stress when they realize that not all of their children are racehorses; some are turtles." (p. 221) Common denominators were found to exist among successful parents. Three major ideas were: (1) Successful parents enabled children to see stress as a positive rather than a negative force; (2) Successful parents taught accountability rather than overprotect; and (3) Successful parents knew how to love by giving guidelines, support, and motivation. (p. 225-236) Schools were found to need to tone down competitiveness and motivate more through group accomplishment. Teachers should begin to acknowledge and handle their own stress to prevent its blocking their relationships with students.

Pines, Maya, "Resilient Children: The Search for Protective Factors," American Educator, Fall, 1984, 8: 34-37.

Pines summarized much of the research that has been done on the study of resilient children and how they did so well despite so many strikes against them. In recent years, many researchers have launched long-term studies of children who were at risk in an effort to find out how those who developed into competent individuals differed from those who collapsed or went astray. Some of the leads pointed to the power of schools and teachers. The schools provided one of the most "effective protective factors for children under stress: a sense of success at a meaningful task." (p. 34) The main difference between schools that seemed to foster delinquency and those that produced good student behavior was their social organization - how they treated their students, the availability of incentives and rewards, and whether the students were given positions of responsibility. (p. 34) The good experiences led to a kind of self-esteem that took control of their lives. Other researchers found that children under stress needed an "oasis - some activity that they can throw themselves into and feel that they are successful." (p. 36) They were active and knew how to seek adult support. So far, researchers could not offer any formula for producing resilience; however, they pointed to factors that seemed to offer children a degree of protection.

Roth, Susan, and Lawrence J. Cohen, "Approach, Avoidance, and Coping With Stress," American Psychologist, July, 1986, 41: 813-819.

Roth and Cohen found the study of stress and coping broad and complex, but there was a coherence based on two concepts central to an understanding of coping with trauma: approach and avoidance. In the more recent studies on coping with stress, approach-avoidance distinction was a core idea. The authors found that "avoidant strategies were useful in that they could reduce stress and prevent anxiety from becoming crippling. Approach strategies, on the other hand, allowed for appropriate action and/or the possibility for noticing and taking advantage of changes in a situation that might make it more controllable." (p. 813) Fourteen approach-avoidance coping formulations were reviewed. The potential costs and benefits of both approach and avoidance were discussed at length. The authors recommended that one stress or trauma be studied at a time, and the coping processes followed over time. The purpose of this strategy was for the investigation of effective coping strategies to proceed in the context of knowledge of critical characteristics of stressful events. The study of coping with individual stressors was believed to lead to a more productive evaluation of the disorder and treatment of stress-related pathology.

Werner, Emmy E., "Resilient Children, " Young Children, November, 1984, 40: 68-72.

Resilient children were defined as those who display "the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or sustained life stress." (p.68) Studies have been done to determine how other children can be helped to become less vulnerable in the face of life's adversities. Some researchers have called these children invulnerable; others consider them to be stress resistant; still others refer to them as superkids. Werner found them to be vulnerable, but invincible. She identified four central characteristics common in psychologically resilient children: "(1) an active, evocative approach toward solving life's problems, enabling them to negotiate successfully an abundance of emotionally hazardous experiences; (2) a tendency to perceive their experiences constructively, even if they caused pain or suffering; (3) the ability, from infancy on, to gain other people's positive attention; and (4) a strong ability to use faith in order to maintain a positive vision of a meaningful life (O'Connell - Higgins 1983)." (p.69) Werner discussed the role of protective factors within the child, within the family, and those outside the family. It was found that as long as the balance between stressful life events and protective factors was manageable for children, they could cope. But when the stressful life events outweigh the protective factors, even the most resilient child could develop problems. Implications for childhood educators were given.

Barnett, Lynn A., "Research Note: Young Children's Resolution of Distress Through Play, " Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, July,1984, 25: 477-483.

The study was an attempt to replicate and expand the investigation by Barnett and Storm (1981) in which pre-school children were introduced to a conflict situation following which some were allowed the opportunity for free play. Videotape recordings and physiological measures of anxiety confirmed expectations that play served to alleviate the distress engendered by the conflict. (p.477) The situation chosen for this study focused on the departure of the mother on the child's first day of school. Children designated either high or low in anxiety were allowed the opportunity for free play or were placed in a control condition. Seventy-four pre-school children (36 male, 38 female) were observed. The physiological measure used was the Palmer Sweat Index (PSI), which had been found to be a reliable indicator of changes in anxiety in young children. The results indicated that highly anxious pre-schoolers reduced anxiety levels through play compared with their peers who listened to a story being read to them. Compared with low-anxiety subjects, highly anxious children engaged in more dramatic/fantasy play forms. Imaginative qualities which the children introduced in their play were found to be more essential to the resolution of the conflict than social forms of play.

Danielson, Harry A., "The Quieting Reflex and Success Imagery," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, December, 1984, 19: 152-155.

Research on the effects of relaxation or imagery programs for elementary school children had been limited when this study was done. This investigation studied the effects on children's standardized test scores of relaxation and imagery when used in combination and in relation to a specific upcoming event. The first phase was done with 593 fifth graders in a large urban-suburban school district in Florida. The second phase, a replication, was done a year later with 475 fifth graders from other schools within the same district. The instrument used was the Science Research Associates Achievement Test (SRA). It was hypothesized that "experimental students would score higher than control students on all subtests. If so, the scores would then be a more accurate reflection of what had been learned; they would not be deflated because of anxiety and tension." (p.153) Trained counselors instructed the experimental group in the use of the quieting reflex (QR) - success imagery (SI). The first phase of the study showed superior results for the QR-SI group, with nine of the ten subscores significantly different. The results of the second phase were less dramatic. It was speculated that districtwide practice testing in the second year contributed to higher SRA scores for all fifth graders. This two-phase study demonstrated that a given relaxation technique (QR) could help students minimize the debilitating effects of anxiety and stress and score higher on standardized tests.

Davis, Martha, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, and Matthew McKay. The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1982.

This workbook was written for all who felt a need for additional knowledge and assistance in handling their stress with relaxation techniques. There were three basic sources of stress discussed: one's environment, body, and thought. Reactions to problems, demands, and dangers were influenced by an innate "fight or flight" response which was inherited from primitive ancestors. (p.5) The authors discussed how stress could be cumulative. Events from two years ago could still be affecting a person. Methods of relaxation and reducing stress discussed were: progressive relaxation, self-hypnosis, meditation, autogenics, imagination, refuting irrational ideas, nutrition, coping skills training, assertiveness training, biofeedback, breathing, time management, thought stopping, and exercise.

Herzfeld, Gerald, and Robin Powell. Coping for Kids: A Complete Stress-Control Program for Students Ages 8 - 18. West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1986.

Coping for Kids was created as a step-by-step program of techniques, exercises, and activities for children ages 8 - 18 to learn to control their own stress. It was felt by the authors that once children could do this, they would become calmer, more receptive to learning, and easier to teach. The program was designed to help young people to relax and overcome their stresses by using the 28 lessons and over 45 activity worksheets that were available in a teacher's edition and a student workbook. Another feature of the program was the eight lessons on two cassette tapes that help students learn to relax and breathe properly. Some of the common stressors of children that the program would address were: test anxiety, "stage fright" before speeches, nervousness about competition and tryouts, peer pressure, concerns about self-concept and appearance, family problems, self-consciousness and lack of confidence, and pressures of the fast-paced world. A bibliography for additional reading and information was given in the back of the teacher's edition.

Krampf, Harry, Dave Hopkins, and John Byrd, "Muscular Relaxation for the Elementary Student," Journal of Physical Education and Recreation, April, 1979, 50: 70-71.

A program of muscular relaxation was described which was created and instituted by the authors as an integral part of the 1978 Summer Youth Fitness School for children age seven to fourteen at the University of Minnesota - Duluth. The program consisted of a series of guided progressive sessions to assist the participants in becoming aware of their tensions and how to release these tensions. There were four components to the method: "(1) relaxation of individual muscles; (2) relaxation of group muscles; (3) relaxation of principle muscle groups; and (4) relaxation of the total body." (p. 70) It was recommended that a muscular relaxation program be included in the elementary school curriculum. It would teach students how to conserve their energy and thereby avoid undue tension and stress within.

Kroll, Maureen, "Stress Management Programme for Children," Early Child Development and Care, 1986, 25: 191-206.

The need to manage one's stress was intensified in this study when research was shown to link stress with cardiovascular disease and even cancer.. Today's children were seen as needing coping mechanisms to deal with threats of nuclear war, environmental decay, increased competition, jobs that were lost, and the list went on. The author was asked to design a stress management program for two classes of third graders at a school that enrolled a high percentage of underprivileged children. A seven-week program was designed that depended heavily on the cooperation among the teachers, parents, and the children as well as the instructor and her staff. The first session centered around defining stress, identifying areas of the body that were affected by stress, distinguishing between good and bad stress, and identifying feelings associated with stressful situations. During the second session, parents and teachers shared with the children some situations in life that have bothered them and how they coped. The children were then asked to distinguish between positive and negative or ineffective ways of coping. In the third session, the nutritional needs of children were addressed and how this related to stress. The next two sessions dealt with having a positive self-image. The sixth session was on physical fitness and how this not only could help children developmentally, but it also could help release stored up energy and tension. Session seven was instruction on how the relaxation of mind and body was essential to maintaining wellness. An evaluation of the program was gathered from the teachers and the students involved. Suggestions for improvement were included.

Kuczen, Barbara S., "Even Kids Suffer From Stress . . . and Help Begins At Home," Early Years, December, 1984, 15: 26-27.

Kuczen directed this information to parents in order that they might see the need for better stress management in their children. She stated that stress was not all bad, and it was an important part of growing up. She included findings from doctors that showed that stress had taken a serious toll on children's health. There had been an increase in blood pressure, depression, ulcers, attempted suicides, and cholesterol levels. Stress was shown to be a factor in many common childhood problems, such as bedwetting or stuttering. (p. 26) Kuczen presented a program for stress management called A.C.T. -- Awareness, Control, and Training. Awareness of self, of stress signals, and of coping styles was found to be needed. Control, according to Kuczen, was a key word, and the ability to make informed decision required training. Children must be taught how to determine sources of stress and how to deal with them. Kuczen concluded that stress was inevitable, but stress-related problems were not.

Matthews, Doris B. Stress Management Model for the Elementary/Middle/High School, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 267 026, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Atlanta, GA, February 22-26, 1986.

A model was developed for use in schools called The Matthews Stress Management formula. This model made use of knowledge of the physiology of stress, motivation of children, appropriate techniques of management, applicability to other areas, and the full recognition of the value and function of relaxation therapy. The formula had four factors - awareness, benefits, change, and dependency - which would result in relaxation. Supervision by qualified, sensitive, and aware personnel should be part of the program. Teachers and administrators were advised to work closely with the parents of children in the program. The formula was recommended for promoting confidence, conquering anxiety, and enjoying feelings of self-worth in children.

Petosa, Richard, and Dick Oldfield, "A Pilot Study of the Impact of Stress Management Techniques on the Classroom Behavior of Elementary School Students," Journal of School Health, February, 1985, 55: 69-71.

Studies of stress intervention have demonstrated the benefits of stress management techniques on health-related variables among school-age children. The authors hypothesized that teaching elementary school children stress management skills would promote appropriate classroom study behavior by enhancing student ability to attend to teacher assigned tasks. This study supported the contention that stress management skills could increase classroom "on-task" behavior. It was also believed that if it could be established that certain coping-related skills would increase the student's ability to learn, teachers could better justify including that instruction into the elementary curriculum. The study was conducted at a public elementary school using 296 five-to-twelve year old children. The sample had a higher percentage of high mobility, low income, single parent families than the national average. Implementing teachers participated in learning Quieting Response (QR) and were given materials for classroom use. They presented the program sequentially followed by instruction in Benson's Relaxation Response. The teaching phase lasted eight days using 25 minutes each day. After this, 15 minutes each day, four days each week was spent on training for a three-month treatment period. An examiner randomly chose six children from each class for observation and evaluation. Each student received a score based on the total number of on-task observations made during a ten minute assessment. The result revealed that gender was not a significant predictor of on-task scores. A mean percent on-task for the control students was 78 percent, while the treatment group mean percent on-task was 89 percent. When on-task classroom behavior increased by 10 percent for a 40-60 minute per week time investment, it seemed reasonable for the authors to conclude that stress management instruction time was well spent.

Prager-Decker, Iris. "Stressing" Relaxation in the Classroom, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 240 085, N.p.,1979.

Prager-Decker discussed at length the reasons given for incorporating classrooom relaxation training in the elementary school curriculum. Research studies were cited which focused on reactions of children to stressful changes and the resulting behavioral and physical disorders. A list of significant life events was given which could cause diseases or misbehavior in children. A unit was included in which techniques like yoga, deep muscle relaxation, and guided visual imagery are described. A list of resources for further relaxation techniques was included.

Proeger, Charlene and Robert D. Myrick, Teaching Children to Relax, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 206 393, Florida Educational Research and Development Council, Inc., Ft. Myers, 1980.

Studies were shown that changes in anxiety level were related to changes in intelligent quotient scores. Anxiety was determined to be a factor in predicting reading grades, studying personalities of underachieving children, and becoming a negative effect on a variety of learning tasks. Anxiety was also found to be related to dependence, hostility, aggression, low peer status, and poor teacher relationships. Relaxation training was used in several schools to counteract all the anxiety. Methods included systematic desensitization, yoga, meditation, guided fantasy, biofeedback, and deep muscle relaxation (DMR). The study concluded with ten experimentally tested DMR exercises which aimed at relaxing various parts of the body, progressing to the relaxation of the whole body.

Roome, John R., and David M. Romney, "Reducing Anxiety in Gifted Children by Inducing Relaxation," Roeper Review, February, 1985, 7: 177-179.

Thirty subjects (17 boys and 13 girls) were drawn from a gifted student program located in a small, mixed rural-urban area. They were homogeneous only with respect to intelligence. Students with behavior problems were excluded from the study. These students were assigned at random to either a Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) group, an EMG biofeedback treatment group, or to a no-treatment, control group. The results showed that the biofeedback group had a significant decrease in state-anxiety and both groups moved toward a more internal locus of control compared with the untreated group. Gifted children were not shown to be more stressed than non-gifted children, however. It was the conclusion of the authors that relaxation training should be considered as a vital component of the educational curriculum in order to help the student realize his/her potential.

St. John, Jeanne, "A Hands-On (Literally!) Approach to Stress Reduction: What's New in Schools?" Thrust, June, 1984, 13: 12-14.

This report was a description of a technique used in Santa Cruz, California by educators. Acupressure, based on the same theory and using the same points as acupuncture, was reported to be practiced widely in most Oriental cultures. While acupressure had not been thoroughly understood or explained by Western science, the meridians (wiring) and points (outlets) of the system were associated with the flow of the body's own electrical current. "When stiffness and tension are present in muscles and joints, the flow of this bio-electrical current is blocked. Stimulating the points with fingers releases this flow, thereby loosening muscles and mental processes." (p. 12) Classroom teachers have begun using it with their students. Reported benefits included becoming more sociable, more receptive to learning and to affection, problem behaviors diminishing, growth in mathematics and language arts areas, relief from migraine headaches, chronic allergy problems, needed weight loss, vision improvement, relief from back and neck pain and tension, chest anxiety, and a general feeling of health and well-being. Most of Santa Cruz's special education teachers continued to use acupressure, some daily, others weekly, with some or all their students. Many parents enrolled in classes to learn the technique to share it with their families.

Winter, Arthur and Ruth. "Protecting Your Brain From Stress." In Build Your Brain Power: Exercises to Reverse Decline and Maximize Your Brain's Potential. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986, pp. 151-177.

The authors reported in their book that "stress, which can be either threatening or pleasurable, causes a reported one thousand chemical and physical changes in your brain and body." (p. 151) Stress was known to stimulate the production of certain hormones and suppress others. When the stress was prolonged, the persistent elevation of some hormones and suppression of others could be harmful to the body. The Winters stated that from "75 to 90 percent of the ills that afflict us are due to stress." (p. 152) More and more evidence has been gathered to prove that stress depressed the body's defense system. Stress could also affect the unborn. Stress has even been reported to prematurely age the adult brain and kill brain cells. "More than 10,000 papers have been published that demonstrated the effectiveness of biofeedback for the management of more than 150 medical and psychological disorders." (p. 164) Hypnosis was another method of mind over matter and a stress reduction tool mentioned. Twelve suggestions were given for alleviating stress.

Zaichkowsky, Linda B., and Leonard D., and John Yeager, "Biofeedback - Assisted Relaxation Training in the Elementary Classroom," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, April, 1986, 20: 261-267.

The authors believed that counselors should find ways to help young people deal with pressures early in their lives so that they will not experience stress-related disorders as adults. The authors personally taught 18 lessons (10-12 minutes each) on stress responses and coping techniques over a six-week period. They found that "nine- and ten-year-old children were able to reduce selected physiological indicators of stress (heart and respiration rates) voluntarily and significantly." (p. 261) The focus of the project was to enhance learning with the use of biofeedback and to use regular classroom teachers as program instructors. The findings indicated children could learn to control heart rate, respiration rate, and skin temperature responses by participating in a program that included instruction on proper breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visual imagery, and temperature biofeedback. However, self-reports of anxiety reduction were not observed. The authors felt that it was conceivable that young children could benefit from stress management training before taking stressful standardized tests.

Zenker, Edward R., and Diana Z. Frey, "Relaxation Helps Less Capable Students," Journal of Reading, January, 1985, 28: 342-344.

This study was conducted to determine if using relaxation techniques and visual image training would improve poor readers' comprehension and literal recall of narrative prose. Numerous studies had shown that relaxation techniques facilitated academic progress. "After Ross suggested that inability to filter distraction was the primary factor in learning disabilities, Levine found that relaxation training minimized the difficulty in attending to an educational task." (p. 342) A ten-day program of exercises in relaxation techniques and visual imagery training was developed which was presented to students daily on a ten-minute tape. The subjects were tenth grade students in a basic education program. They were all below average in ability and achievement. After ten days, the students' comprehension was tested with a two-page story written at fourth grade level. The students were asked to answer ten literal level questions that tested recall of information. The control group averaged 66 percent correct, while the experimental group averaged 74 percent correct. The 8 percent difference was statistically different and suggested the positive effects of relaxation techniques and visual imagery in helping students comprehend more efficiently. (p. 343)

TEACHER-PARENT ROLE IN HELPING CHILDREN MANAGE STRESS

Allan, John, and Eileen Anderson, "Children and Crises: A Classroom Guidance Approach," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, December, 1986, 21: 143-149.

The authors designed a guidance project to be used with children to provide them with coping skills before crisis events. Crisis was defined as "a variant of stress that is so severe that the individual becomes disorganized and unable to function effectively." (p. 143) Sandler and Ramsay's work was cited in which they found that loss events (e.g., death of a parent, sibling, or friend; divorce and separation) were the main elicitors of a crisis reaction in children, followed by family troubles (e.g., abuse, neglect, job loss). (p. 144) Using a class discussion format, the authors devised a discussion of children and crises. In the first lesson, the students were asked to share their definitions of the word crisis and to describe the kinds of crises that affected children. The lesson ended with a drawing activity showing a crisis experience. During the second lesson, the students wrote a story about a crisis that had happened to them or someone they knew or had heard about. Opportunities for sharing were given. The third lesson focused on asking how children felt in a crisis situation, what would help someone in a crisis, what helped them, how they could help others, and how parents and teachers could help. The counselor then summarized the discussions and asked what the students learned. Those lessons were given in two second-grade, fifth-grade, and eighth-grade classes. The results generated many positive coping strategies. The counselors helped many students talk about some of their problems, understand crises better, and think about future coping strategies. The counselors helped the teachers to recognize some of their students' struggles, recognize who needed counseling referral, and to discover that non-evaluative class discussions improved communication.

Chandler, Louis A., "What Teachers Can Do About Childhood Stress," Phi Delta Kappan, December, 1981, 63: 276-277.

Rather than shielding children from stress, parents and teachers should assist them in developing effective coping mechanisms that will enable them to adjust to the realities of life. Chandler stated that teachers and parents should allow children to believe that adults are more or less in control of events. This would avoid the stressful insecurity that could arise when they thought that they themselves were in charge or that no one was in charge. The author stressed the importance of letting children have physical and psychological limits. These make the world more manageable, more secure,and more understandable. (p.277) Some suggestions were given for teachers to help children develop effective methods for coping with stress. A few listed were: teachers should try to structure the classroom environment, follow a predictable schedule, take a progress-oriented approach to evaluation, help students set realistic academic goals that challenge but do not overwhelm, help children develop inner controls, reinforce the concept that behavior always carries consequences, discipline, but always a chance for a fresh start, and provide support and understanding to students who are facing stressful events outside of school. (p.278)

Dougherty, A. Michael, and Mary D. Deck, "Helping Teachers to Help Children Cope with Stress, " Humanistic Education and Development, September, 1984, 23: 36-45.

This study offered some ways that counselors could work with teachers of grades K-8 in an inservice format to help students cope with stress. A two-session workshop was suggested with a total time needed of approximately two hours. Three objectives were given: "(1) to assist teachers in becoming more aware of normal childhood stressors; (2) to make teachers more aware of various methods of assisting children in coping with real or perceived stressful events; and (3) to provide an experience with selected methods of managing stress. (p.37) In the first session, time was spent introducing common stressors, responses, and general coping skills. Recalling and analyzing childhood stressors was done and four basic response patterns to stress were discussed: dependent, impulsive, passive-aggressive, and repressed (Chandler,1982). (p.39) Session two consisted of a discussion of general ways that teachers could reduce unnecessary stress at school. A list of twenty teacher activities/suggestions was given. The authors stated that through this activity, counselors could help teachers understand that ignoring stress in children does not make it go away.

Elkind, David, "Stress and the Middle-Grader," Education Digest, May, 1986, 51:30-34.

Middle-graders today were found to be under more stress than in the past and were less prepared to cope "because they have not had the time and guidance needed to acquire a healthy sense of self-esteem and self-identity," according to Elkind. (p.34) Middle-graders encountered foreseeable and avoidable situations, called Type A stressors, arising from increased freedoms of today's young people. The most common reaction to these Type A stressors was anxiety. These situations call for decision making that middle-graders were not prepared to make. Type B stress situations were described as those that are neither foreseeable nor avoidable, as in the sudden death of a loved one, or an accident or illness. Divorce was another Type B stressor to middle-graders. The basic response to these stressors was depression. Type C stress situations are foreseeable but not avoidable. These were described as those centered around school-work. For many of the young, academic success is at the core of their self-esteem. Test scores and grades come to be measures of a person's value. Many young people respond with anger, the most common emotional response to Type C stressors. One recommendation Elkind gave was to teach young people a three-step decision-making process to help with Type A stressors. When Type B stressors are present, one has to rely on a set of values, religious or otherwise. Finally, the best strategies to impart for dealing with Type C stressors are good work habits.

Fooner, Andrea, "Classroom Stress: Helping Students Cope," Forecast for Home Economics, February, 1982, 27: 41-42.

With much written about ways teachers could handle their stress, the author felt a need to have teachers address students' stress levels as well. Students could be helped to deal with stress in positive ways that could allow them to learn more. This would also make learning more pleasant and effective. Ways of reducing classroom stress were mentioned, such as: be specific about class expectations, assess own teaching personality, defuse competition that is negative and unhealthy, reduce test anxiety by reviewing before exams, and recognize qualities in students other than academics which can motivate and encourage them. (p. 41) A final suggestion was to be an aware teacher who could help reduce unnecessary tension and make school less stressful for everyone.

Honig, Alice Sterling, "Stress and Coping in Children (Part 2)," Young Children, July, 1986, 41: 47-59.

Part two of Honig's research dealt with the interpersonal stressors between parents and children. The effects of mental illness in parents and inept parenting practices were significant stressors for children. It was found that stress was greater for children whose parents lacked problem-solving skills in coping with crises outside and inside the family. Studies of child abuse and stressors that cluster with child abuse led the author to suggest that specific parent training in child management skills and in using different techniques for different goals might be helpful in reducing stress for children in abusive families. A list of telltale signs of stress in young children to alert parents and teachers was included. Werner and Smith's study of resilient children was cited in which it was found that those children had affectionate, good-natured temperaments and elicited positive responses from their families and from strangers. A detailed list of twenty ways in which teachers could help children cope with stress was included. Honig stated that "adults who care for children in stressful life situations need to have a wide variety of techniques and ideas to help young children adjust better in classrooms, at home, and in stressful situations such as temporary foster care or hospitalization." (p. 55)

Johns, Bruce, and Martha, "Stress Burns Out Kids, Too," Education Digest, October, 1983, 49: 44-46.

The fears and anxiety of children were found to be just as threatening and stress-provoking as those of adults. Whereas adults might understand what was happening, children would not. Some children might respond to stress by fighting back in any way they could. Others might distance themselves from everything which could be interpreted as laziness. Parental forms of punishment often increased the child's stress level and made school problems even worse. The authors reported that teachers should not try to shelter children from stressful situations, but help them to develop an ability to respond in a positive, constructive way. Teachers were encouraged to create a warm environment, teach and demonstrate problem-solving skills, reinforce in as many positive ways as possible, establish cooperative learning teams, teach children about the correlation of diet and rest with the ability to handle stress, and teach some simple relaxation exercises that can "give students a sense of control over the way they feel, think, act, and learn." (p.46)

Kersey, Katharine C., "The Parent's Role in Helping Children Handle Stress." In Helping Your Child Handle Stress. Wash., D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1986, pp.13-17.

Children were found by Kersey to be even more vulnerable to stress than adults, because they did not have previous experiences to fall back upon. They could not tell adults what they were experiencing, so they would show through their behavior what stressed and hurt them. Trouble signs often seen in children in overly stressful situations were listed by age groups. Strategies followed that could be used effectively for many different situations as long as the child's age, personality, and maturity were taken into consideration. Listening and talking (communicating) were two dominant themes throughout all the suggestions listed. Every child was said to need at least one adult who is significant and meaningful in his/her life. The mental health of this adult would be modeled by the child, and the child would grow up to internalize the coping skills that were learned through observation and imitation. A list of resources for adults and children who faced various stresses was given.

Madden, Lowell, "How to Use Literature to Help Students Cope with Life," Indiana Reading Quarterly, Fall, 1985, 18: 8-12.

Madden reported that teachers could help their students cope better with the problems of life by reading aloud selected books to them. The characters in the chosen books demonstrated attitudes and social skills and helped students understand and recognize the value of developing caring relationships. Other books helped children develop courage and ways to form personal identities. Madden included results of research done by Berg-Cross and Berg-Cross who found that the "expressed attitudes and values of young children can be significantly changed by hearing a picture storybook read to them that espouses different attitudes." (p.9) Another study done by Hayes and Conklin with pre-adolescents resulted in observation of positive changes in intergroup attitudes when students were exposed to various attitude treatments. The method which produced the highest change involved reading appropriate short stories and novels which portrayed minority groups in a favorable way, and involved the students in class discussions following the reading. The psychologist McDonald was reported to have found that a person would identify with a model who was successfully coping with a problem and would imitate the behavior. An eight-step plan was described by Madden for using literature to help influence students' coping skills and behavior.

Nowicki, Stephen, Jr., "How Children View Their World Affects Behavior," Early Years, December, 1984, 15: 29,49.

When asked why some children perform better in school than others even when they were of equal basic academic ability or from similar environmental stresses, Nowicki found part of the answer to lie in the personality variable called "locus of contol." (p. 29) Locus of control referred to the manner in which people viewed events that happened to them. If they believed that there was a connection between what they did and what happened to them, they were called internally controlled. If they believed that what happened to them was due only to luck, chance, fate or powerful others, they were called externally controlled. Internals were reported to be happier, less anxious, and more able to deal with life than externals. Signs of externality were: a lack of persistence or confidence, easily frustrated, over or underestimated abilities, overreaction to failures, and difficulty reading others' emotions. The author devised ways of assessing locus of control orientation. He found it to originate in parent-child interactions. Teachers and parents should help children develop internality by helping them learn which events are realistically under their control. Three methods of promoting internality discussed were: (1) catch children being internal and reward; (2) reward more often and punish less; and (3) be consistent. These would help children deal with the ever-present problems they would face.

Packard, Vance. Our Endangered Children. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1983.

Packard's book contained outlined details of what millions of children were experiencing in their lives - wondering if their parents were going to split, being alone a lot of the time, having little real contact with adults, feeling they were a burden, and coping with parents who were self-absorbed, just to name a few. Packard cited four elementary needs of all children developed by The Children's Defense Fund: "(1) a need to feel wanted and accepted; (2) a need for continuity in relationships with biological or psychological parents; (3) a need to have some sense that there is a regular, dependable quality to the world in which they live; and (4) a need for thoughtful guidance in coping with the demands of growing up." (p. 327) Nine skills for parents were described that Packard felt would help create an environment in which children would thrive: "(1) show unconditional love for child; (2) interact with child, especially verbally; (3) help child develop high self-esteem; (4) condition child to do well; (5) encourage child to be an explorer; (6) give child a strong sense of family solidarity, even in a one-parent home; (7) move child from parent discipline to self-discipline; (8) guide child toward a clear system of values; and (9) help child experience plenty of responsibility." (p. 328-339)

Schilling, Deanna E., "Teacher, I'm Afraid . . .," Early Years, January, 1986, 16: 53,58.

Schilling spent the past ten years investigating the fears and anxieties that children had, as well as strategies teachers had developed to respond to them. This article outlined some of those strategies. Responding quickly to classroom upsets and unplanned events was found to be important as well as taking time to listen to students' anxieties expressed verbally. Methods of reducing academic anxieties were listed. Discipline and management techniques that were effective were discussed as well as the benefits of trying relaxation techniques in the classroom. Making time to listen to students who had real fears in their lives was found to play a key role in helping them move forward emotionally and academically.

Williams, Andrea, "Teaching Gifted Students How to Deal With Stress," The Gifted Child Quarterly, Spring, 1979, 23: 136-141.

Within this study by Williams were summaries of several other studies. One done by Torrance and Gowan (1972) found that during periods of low creative potential, gifted students were exposed to all kinds of school pressures and influences. Torrance (1968) found that by fourth grade, children were so accustomed to being evaluated and criticized on everything that instructions which freed them from stressful situations had little effect. Eighteen gifted seventh grade students were chosen to work with in developing a coping model to integrate with independent study. A group of teachers helped Williams construct a series of attitude scales and inventories that identified coping behaviors. A six-step coping model was developed in which the student: (1) gathered concepts; (2) recognized the problem; (3) developed a working hypothesis; (4) designed the investigation; (5) decided on a possible solution; and (6) confirmed or disproved. (p. 137-138) Many behavioral changes were noted. Most noteworthy was the reduction of fear and failure and the reduction of the student's need for approval of ideas. Students indicated that the most beneficial parts of the model were the oral communication components. (p. 139)

Youngs, Bettie B., "Stress Within Students: Can Educators Help to Keep It to a Minimum?" NASSP Bulletin, March, 1981, 65: 96-109.

In this study, Youngs discussed the role, causes, and signals of stress in children from infancy through adolescence. Harvard research was included that pointed directly to the role of stress in the development of diseases, including asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, an overactive thyroid gland, allergies, ulcers, colitis, high blood pressure, hypertension, migraine headaches, and so on. (p. 97) The history of the concept of stress was given using Cannon's first description as the "flight or fight" syndrome, followed by Selye's first understanding of stress as an "adaptational response of the human body." (p. 98) Dr. Lee Salk was cited for his study of early childhood development. He found that infants subjected to long or frequent periods of stress "did not become stronger and more effective in dealing with problems later on, and learned to use infantile methods for coping with later stressors." (p. 99) Young school-age children were concerned about school. They often had many psychosomatic symptoms or an aversion to school. They were so aware of peer reactions, and had a great fear that no one would be there at the end of the day to pick them up. Adolescents had many physical and emotional changes to contend with . Adolescence differed from the other stages in that the degree to which they struggled was usually greater and more visible. Youngs offered suggestions to help students deal with stress more effectively, such as helping students develop a sense of trust in others and assisting children in developing a greater capacity to strengthen their resistance to pressure without developing a stress reaction.

SUMMARY

The study of human stress was reported by all researchers to have been given much attention. Research over the past 40 years has shown stress to be linked to many illnesses and diseases, including heart problems, elevated blood pressure, ulcers, and even cancer, according to Kroll, Kuczen, and Duncan. Winter and Winter produced studies showing that from "75 to 90 percent of the ills that afflict us are due to stress" (Winter and Winter 1986: 152). They went on to state that stress could affect the unborn and even prematurely age the adult brain and kill brain cells. Hans Selye, often called the "Father of Stress" in light of his pioneering work in stress research, discovered that the body made similar responses to any demand placed upon it. The body reacted in a general way whether or not it experienced negative stress known as distress or positive stress named eustress.

Amidst all of the research on stress, children were forgotten until only recently. Stress had been treated as an adult problem. However, children were found to be even more vulnerable to stress than adults. Kersey believed this was because they did not have previous experiences and coping skills to fall back upon. Duncan found a wide variety of stressors for children including birth of a sibling, entering school, moving, parents' marital problems and illness, just to list a few. Holmes and Raye developed a scale of magnitude for common life events of children that required change. In addition, Chandler created the Children's Life Events Inventory which was used to determine how many potentially stressful events a child might have experienced and what the events were.

Elkind reported that children of today have had to endure more overload because of working parents and the divorce/separation of parents. Schools have stressed children by stereotyping them, and the media has added stress by giving children information for which they were not emotionally ready. Elkind defined Type A , Type B, and Type C behaviors for middle graders (aged nine to thirteen) and stated that these stressors arose from increased freedoms, accidents, illnesses, parental problems, and school problems.

Falk and Falk found that what made a difference between common and more severe stress in adolescents was the intensity of the stress and the ability to cope. The Adolescent Life Change Scale was developed from similar data by Yeaworth.

Johns and Johns found that "fears and anxieties of children were found to be just as threatening and stress-provoking as those of adults" (Johns and Johns 1983: 44). Honig's research showed that stress could arise from internal or external factors with some being acute (sudden and short-lived) while others were chronic (cumulative and long-term).

The effects of stress were presented and reviewed by Shrier, Webb, Arent, and Chandler who all studied common stressors and responses. Risks were found to be greater when the stress was on-going or too overwhelming. Elementary children were found to have more significant affective distress than older children. Chandler found that children may respond to emotional distress in various ways. "One child may turn inward, another may act out" (Chandler, 1981: 164). Once again, early research done by Selye was a foundation for many studies. He defined the standard manner in which the body responds to stress as the general adaptation syndrome (G.A.S.) - (a) the alarm reaction; (b) the stage of

resistance and adaptation; and (c) the stage of exhaustion.

Research using different measures of Type A behavior for children was presented by Lundberg and Rubenzer. The dramatic increase in child suicide was studied by Orbach and Rosenthal which showed that intentional death-seeking behavior seemed to be the only recourse after the presence of increased family stress and/or depressive symptoms. Matter and Matter also explored the many causes of suicide in children. Childhood depression was the subject of another study done by Lefkowitz and Tesiny.

Within the two chosen areas of study in family and school-related stress, Walker used a model of studying family stress developed by Hill in 1949. Cantrell summarized the work of Wallerstein and Kelly of 1980 in which the conclusion was that divorce was very stressful for children. The children experienced fright, sadness, confusion, headaches, and stomachaches linked to parental conflict and visits. Freeman found four characteristics common of children in the post-divorce situation: guilt, fear, anger, and depression. Kinard and Reinherz studied the differences among early disrupted, recently disrupted, and never-disrupted families. "Marital disruption resulted in increased problems of attention, withdrawal, dependency, and hostility for children in recently disrupted families" (Kinard and Reinherz 1986: 291).

Children of alcoholics were also identified as highly stressed. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism identified the problems and needs of children of alcoholic parents. An estimated seven million children were reported by Weddle and Wishon to be growing up in those environments.

School-related stressors that were discussed were varied and included studies of helping children deal with the death of a classmate (Arena, Hermann, and Hoffman), loneliness with respect to rejected and

neglected peer status (Asher and Wheeler), test-anxiety (Dendato and Diener along with Hunter), and classroom social status and ethnicity in relation to stress (Yamamato and Byrnes). Rubenzer found that gifted children were particularly susceptible to stress and burnout, whereas Roome and Romney found that gifted children were not shown to be more stressed than non-gifted ones.

In their study, Blom, Cheney, and Snoddy examined aggressive behaviors that were found to be sources of stress for children. Academic pressure and excessive competition were also addressed in that study. Forman and O'Malley discussed research that found two major categories of stressors for pupils -- achievement and social. Fears and worries of children were studies by Crowley and Moracco. Both studies resulted in the conclusion that these fears resulted in less concentration in the classroom and lower levels of performance.

Nealis and Miller concentrated their efforts on school problems that affected childhood headaches. Degrees of school phobia were discussed by Kersey and the accompanying physical symptoms. School stress was defined by Schultz and Heuchert as "anything that a student perceived as a threat - either to his/her survival or to his/her self-image" (Schultz and Heuchert 1983: 23).

The study of coping skills and resilient children was addressed by Brenner. He found that coping modes were learned from parents, teachers, and other relatives unknowingly. Stress could be a motivational force, according to Duncan, who found that some stress should be desired. Stress resistance was studied by Garmezy, Masten and Tellegen, and was defined as "the manifestations of competence in children despite exposure to stressful events" (Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen 1984: 98).

Pines and Werner both summarized research done on resilient children and how they coped so well despite their environments. Some of the leads

pointed to the power of schools and teachers along with the role of protective factors within the child, the family, and outside the family. Approach-avoidance strategies for coping with stress were studied by Roth and Cohen. The authors recommended that further studies be done in this area.

Managing and preventing stress in children were studied by many. Barnett described the results of a study done on young children's resolution of distress through play. Matthews presented a model of stress management for schools. The formula had four factors which when used together would result in relaxation. Relaxation techniques were found to reduce anxiety in gifted children (Roome and Romney) and help less capable students as well (Zenker and Frey). Petosa and Oldfield's study supported the contention that stress management skills would increase classroom "on-task" behavior.

The stress management techniques presented were many. Prager-Decker described the usefulness of yoga, deep muscle relaxation, and guided visual imagery. A program of muscular relaxation was prescribed by Krampf, Hopkins, and Byrd and how this would teach students to conserve energy and avoid tension and stress. Herzfeld and Powell developed a coping kit for children which consisted of lessons, worksheets, and relaxation exercises on tape that addressed the problems which many typical stressors caused. Davis, Eshelman, and McKay created a workbook of relaxation and stress-reduction methods, such as progressive relaxation, self-hypnosis, meditation, autogenics, assertiveness training, biofeedback, breathing, time management, and exercise. Danielson found that relaxation and imagery exercises could even be used to minimize the debilitating effects of anxiety and stress on students when taking standardized tests. Proeger and Myrick reported that relaxation training was used in several schools to counteract anxiety

related to dependence, hostility, aggression, low peer status, and poor teacher relationships.

A new (but old) technique used in some schools in California was presented by St. John. Acupressure, based on the same theory and using the same points as acupuncture, was shown to have many benefits including growth in subject areas, relief from migraines and neck pain, and more receptive behaviors for learning.

Specific strategies for parents and teachers to use with children were studied and developed. Zaichkowsky, Leonard, and Yeager as well as Chandler recommended biofeedback-assisted relaxation training for enhanced learning. Forman and O'Malley's study of school stress interventions found that relaxation training promoted anxiety reduction by teaching individuals to reduce muscle tension. Weddle and Wishon's study of children of alcoholics led to several recommendations for teachers. They determined that experiences that enhanced self-esteem should be provided as well as age-appropriate alcohol awareness programs.

Teachers were reported by Freeman as needing to serve as a support system for the divorced parent as well as the child. Changes in behavior, attitude, and performance would need to be noted and referrals of more severe problems would need to be made to professional agencies. Madden believed that teachers could help their pupils cope better with their problems by reading selected literature to them that modeled attitudes with which they could identify.

Nowicki proposed a "locus of control" personality variable that was used to identify children as internally or externally controlled (Nowicki 1984: 29). Teachers were encouraged to promote internality in children by helping them learn which events were realistically under their control. Allan and Anderson developed a guidance discussion approach to use with pupils in the classroom. Definitions of a crisis were solicited, as well as

descriptions of crises in their lives. Coping strategies were formulated, and non-evaluative class discussions improved communication.

Schilling discussed the benefits of trying relaxation techniques in the classroom, and making time to listen to students who had fears and anxieties. Youngs offered several suggestions to help students to deal with stress more effectively. Helping pupils develop a sense of trust in others and assisting children in developing more resistance to pressure without developing a stress reaction were recommended. Duncan maintained that all stress should not be avoided in an effort to help children cope with it. Normal development and social adjustments required that children be able to tolerate minimal amounts of stress. Teacher support should be extended, but always with the goal of developing problem-solving abilities.

Williams' work on developing a coping model for children resulted in the pupils indicating that the most beneficial parts of the model were the oral communication components (Williams 1979: 139). Chandler stressed the importance of letting children have physical and psychological limits that make the world more manageable, secure, and understandable (Chandler 1981: 277). Teachers were advised to structure classroom environment, follow a schedule, help children set realistic goals and develop inner controls, reinforce the concept that behavior always carries consequences, provide chances for a fresh start, and be there for support and understanding.

Dougherty and Deck listed twenty teacher activities/suggestions for reducing unnecessary stress at school. Fooner also addressed the importance of reducing students' stress levels that could allow them to learn more. Ways of decreasing their stress were given, such as being specific about class expectations, defusing competition that is unhealthy, reducing test anxiety by reviewing before exams, and recognizing students'

non-academic qualities to motivate and encourage them. Being an aware teacher was a final suggestion by Fooner.

Honig discussed a "need for teachers to have a wide variety of techniques to help young children adjust better in classrooms, at home, and in stressful situations . . . " (Honig, Part 2, 1986: 55). Brenner offered three helping strategies for use with children under stress, all involving coping strategies and how to use them. Miller looked to parents as the ones who could minimize stress for children. They should enable children to see stress as a positive rather than a negative force, teach accountability rather than overprotect, and know how to love by giving guidelines, support and motivation. Nine parental skills were outlined by Packard that would help create an environment in which children would thrive, all of which helped to provide a regular, dependable quality to the world they live in.

Finally, nearly all researchers included in this study reported a need for further evaluation in the areas of childhood stress and coping strategies. Walker was one who felt that research from a broader perspective would add to the general knowledge about the development of individuals and families. Many studies included lists of resources for parents and teachers on stress research, stressors for children, coping and management strategies, relaxation techniques, and children's literature dealing with childhood problems.

CONCLUSIONS

Numerous books and hundreds of articles have been devoted to explaining stress, pointing out its negative effects, and offering suggestions for reducing its impact. Parallel to this has been the rise in interest in the prominent and dangerous role stress could play in physical illness. Research linked stress to many illnesses and diseases, including heart problems, elevated blood pressure, ulcers, and even cancer.

For many years, studies of stress did not include findings on children. Stress was treated as an adult problem. The idea that childhood was a time of feeling carefree, happy, and immune from worry was found to be inaccurate. Normal, healthy children, just like adults, encountered stressful situations daily.

The harmful effects of stress on children were found to only be beginning to become apparent. The alarming number of suicides in young children attested to the fact that some sought a permanent release from the stresses of life. Children were found to develop stress-induced illnesses and some began to show signs of so-called "Type A" behavior, whereby they became fast paced, rushed, and nervous. School phobias developed in some children. Others simply withdrew which led to studies of loneliness and depression.

Two dangerous problems with childhood stress were that the effects of this stress were found to be cumulative, and that children could lack the intellectual skills necessary to detemine what caused the stress or what to do about it. The danger would be that they could begin early to develop less effective ways of dealing with stress that would, in turn, develop into noneffective adult patterns. The large number of adults who have problems dealing with stress suggests that effective coping

strategies were not developed when they were young.

The causes of stress in children were both predictable and surprising. They were troubled with problems at home, in school, and with a variety of health-related issues. This study dealt specifically with those related to family and school. The major stressor for children today seemed to be the breakdown of the family. Divorce was seen as difficult for everyone involved, but it has become clear that it is most difficult for young children. Alcoholic parents and single-parent homes were additional causes of family-related stress.

School was where test anxiety, peer pressure, and academic competition was experienced. School phobia was found to be caused by an environment where children were exposed to a number of stressors and few efforts were made at relieving that stress. It was found that teachers who fostered flexibility of thought, openness, and adaptability allowed children to gain the ability to think, and the understanding and control to guide their lives developed. Teachers that were aware, sensitive, and concerned developed more than academic skills in children. They helped children gain control over their own lives, be good problem solvers, and make good decisions.

Stress management and coping techniques must be taught and modeled to children. Praising children, encouraging them to communicate, helping them succeed, and creating a support system in a positive way were all things mentioned that parents and teachers could do to promote commitment to life for children. The importance of teaching children relaxation and deep breathing techniques , guided imagery exercises, proper nutrition, and physical fitness was stated over and over again in research findings. Problem-solving methods, assertiveness, how to handle anger, ways to say "no," and methods to manage time were also identified as necessary traits for interaction with others around them.

Once pupils can do these things at school, they become calmer, more receptive to learning, and easier to teach. Once children can do these things at home, they become happier, more confident, and more eager to want to face each new day.

Caregivers have an obligation to fulfill to all the young people around them. Although children may look and act like adults, they are not adults, and they may not be ready for many of the adult situations in which they find themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Life is full of uncertainties and unplanned circumstances, both for adults and children. Everyone struggles to find alternatives or acceptable ways of coping with problems. Parents and teachers must teach the skills necessary for handling social situations, demands, pressures, and physical illnesses or injuries. The following suggestions are given to help children deal with stress more effectively:

1. Parents and teachers should be knowledgeable and perceptive about childhood problems and stressors.
2. Oral communication with children should be encouraged, developed, and maintained, both at home and at school.
3. Parents and teachers should communicate the rules and regulations for children in order that they might feel secure and aware of their limits.
4. Parents and teachers should let children know precisely what is expected of them and what responsibilities they have.
5. Parents and teachers should let children know the consequences for behaviors and that they will be consistently followed.
6. Parents and teachers should teach children the many alternatives that may be chosen as leisure-time activities.
7. Support groups should be offered in school settings for children of recently disrupted families and alcoholism.
8. Parents and teachers should help children gain a sense of mastery by helping them set attainable goals, being supportive, and rewarding positively when due.

9. Parents and teachers should help children get involved, but not too involved.
10. Parents and teachers should help children learn from failure and be in control.
11. Parents and teachers should help children learn to change situations that need changing, and how to react to situations they cannot change.
12. Parents and teachers should learn to handle their own stress effectively in order to provide a good coping model for children.

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BACKGROUND

Name:	Linda S. Rakow	
Address:	12833 Darlene Court Granger, Indiana 46530	
Education:	1981-1987	I.U.S.B. Masters program, Education, to graduate in May, 1987
	1977	Indiana University B.S. in Elementary Education
Experience:	1981 - Present	Christ the King School South Bend, Indiana 4th grade teacher
	1980-1981	Christ the King School 6th and 7th grade teacher Reading and Religion
	1978-1980	Litchfield Elementary School Litchfield, Michigan 3rd-4th grade teacher
	1972 - Present	Mother of two children

As a teacher who has worked very hard to meet the needs of all my students, I have become aware that many students show signs of emotional stress and inability to handle daily problems in their lives. I wanted to become better at identifying the student whose tolerance for stress has exceeded its limits. This student needs my help, as well as the help of parents and counselors. Only after students have learned to manage their stress can they fully give their attention to other events in their lives. As a result of this study, I am more familiar with strategies for helping students cope with stress, and I am more prepared to respond to the challenges that children present to adults.